

UN experts call on President to take concrete action to protect civic space in Guatemala

13 March 2024

Following previous communications and concerns about human rights challenges in Guatemala, we would like to encourage the new President and his Government to take concrete action in the following areas:

- **Civic space:** Ensure that the legislative framework on freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression complies with international standards, in particular with articles 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and ensure an enabling and safe environment to hold demonstrations, free from discrimination and undue interference.
- **Human rights defenders:** Implement the judgement from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ordering the adoption of a human rights defenders protection law, in order to create preventive and protection measures to mitigate comprehensively and effectively the risks faced by human rights defenders, including women human rights defenders in the country, both at the individual and collective level. This includes the reactivation of the “analysis unit of attacks against human rights defenders”; ensuring close and timely coordination between the various State institutions responsible for guaranteeing protection; the establishment and implementation of flexible and individualized risk analysis procedures, that include the active participation of the beneficiaries and their representatives; as well as the application of differentiated approaches, from a gender, intersectional and ethnic perspective.
- **Indigenous Peoples:** Address the situation of inequality, racism and structural discrimination suffered by Indigenous Peoples, in order to comprehensively protect their rights to lands, territories, natural resources, as well as to participate in public affairs, associate and assembly to defend their ancestral land without repression and marginalization and their right to promote and maintain their legal and juridical systems, with a particular attention to the rights of Indigenous women and children, including their safety and security.
- **Media and journalists:** Promote and invest in free, independent and pluralistic media and ensure the safety of journalists by putting in place protection measures and by adequately investigating and prosecuting all threats and acts of violence against journalists, and cease the judicial harassment of journalists and independent media organizations.

Signed:

Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association;

Mary Lawlor, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders;

José Francisco Calí Tzay, Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples;

Irene Khan, Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression;

Reem Alsalem, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences;

Graeme Reid, Independent Expert on Protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity